

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU #72

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Final Report

June 20, 2000

Visit Conducted on:

February 16 - 17, 2000

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction

II. Status of Corrective Actions from Previous Program Approval Visit

III. Issues of Significance

IV. Citations to the New Hampshire Standards for the Education of
Students with Disabilities

(Commendations, Citations and Suggestions for each school)

Note: It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.

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SAU #72

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU #72 comprised of the following schools: Alton Central School. The visiting team met on February 16 and 17, 2000 in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the Special Education Director, building principals, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via telephone. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: *Conducted in 1995 as part of SAU #51.*

After reviewing the previous program approval report (when the Alton Central School was part of SAU #51), the materials submitted for this review and conducting visits to each grade level in the school, it was determined that paperwork citations noted in the 1995 report continue to warrant attention at the Alton Central School. The program approval team found that many IEPs were still missing components and it was not always evident that regular and systematic monitoring of IEPs was occurring. In addition, some files still did not have records of disclosure or evaluation summary reports and there wasn't always evidence that a teacher of each suspected disability was at team meetings.

It is recommended by the program approval team that SAU #72 (Alton Central School) consider revising their special education forms and IEPs to comply with current state standards and federal regulations, which may alleviate the citations of compliance. It is also noted that SAU #72 needs to devote particular attention to ensuring sure that IEPs contain all the required components, including measurable annual goals and short-term objectives, and that they accurately reflect the services that are being provided. In addition, the team suggested that it might be beneficial to consider changing the organization of the special education files in order to facilitate retrieval of information.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Throughout SAU #72 (Alton Central School) there is a commitment toward meeting the needs of students, and it is evident that the staff is dedicated, caring and child-centered. After visiting each of the grade levels at the Alton Central School, an issue of significance identified by the visiting team was centered around the documentation of the special education process from referral to identification. In addition, the team also noted that all grade levels at the Alton Central School lack the adequate space needed for the provision of special education services, conducting evaluations, and holding required meetings.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE, Continued:

It was evident to the visiting team that staff, administration and parents in SAU #72 feel that the current Special Education Director has been supportive of staff and has improved the special education process and services since joining the SAU this year.

In conclusion, the visiting team would like to commend SAU #72 for its commitment and caring toward the needs of special education students. The staff and teachers have been going through a period of adjustment and change this year with a new Special Education Director, as well as increased space constraints in all grade levels, and they are commended for maintaining a positive spirit and a dedication to all students.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: SAU-WIDE

Name of Program(s) Visited: Alton Central School

COMMENDATIONS:

- The new Special Education Director is viewed by staff as supportive and helpful.
- The school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Having all grade levels in the same building allows both teachers and students to know each other well as they move from kindergarten through high school.
- The teachers at Alton Central School are dedicated to the needs of students.
- Parents in the SAU are pleased with special education services this year, and feel that the new special education director is advocating for services for their children
- The "Special Education Handbook for Parents" is an effective means of educating parents about the special education process.
- The school seeks outside expert consultation when needed for students, in areas such as autism, P.D.D., etc.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1119.06 There is insufficient space in the Alton Central School for the adequate provision of special education services, evaluations and parent meetings.

SUGGESTIONS:

- It would be beneficial for the special education teachers and staff at the Alton Central School to meet on a weekly basis to be kept up-to-date and informed of current state and federal special education requirements.
- Teams of regular and special education teachers at each grade level need to be provided the time to meet regularly in order to discuss student needs.
- When facility issues are addressed, the SAU should consider developing a preschool special needs program within the Alton Central School.
- The regular education teachers would benefit from additional professional development on special education issues and how to work with special education students in their classrooms.
- The SAU needs to have policies, procedures and a plan in place to address suspension of students exceeding 10 days.
- The "Special Education Handbook for Parents" should be updated to reflect the new IDEA regulations.
- The special education forms and IEPs should be updated to reflect current state standards and the new federal regulations. The SAU may want to consider the adoption of the NH State Model Forms.
- The SAU would benefit from acquiring and updating technology within the school.
- The SAU should consider hiring additional paraprofessionals to better facilitate inclusion in the regular classrooms, especially at the middle and high school level.

- The SAU might want to review the current format being used to organize student records to ensure that essential information is organized and easily retrieved.

Preschool Program at Kim's Kiddie Corner, Alton, NH
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PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Preschool

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 2 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- Preschool services are provided in an inclusive setting.
- The preschool teacher is kind, caring and dedicated to the students.
- There are weekly team meetings with the preschool teacher, the consulting special education teacher from Alton and the speech-language pathologist.
- Speech, occupational and physical therapy services are provided at the preschool by consulting therapists.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.02(b) 1 file: lacked evidence of a written notice of referral given to parents.

Ed. 1107.02(d) 2 files: lacked evidence of a written prior notice.

Ed. 1109.01(g) 2 files: the location of services was not specified on the IEP.

Ed. 1109.01(j) 2 files: some providers of services were not specified on the IEP.

Ed. 1109.04(a) 1 file: lacked evidence that parents were given a 10-day notice of the IEP meeting.
1 file: Lacked evidence of evidence that parents were given their procedural safeguards at the notice of the IEP meeting.

Ed. 1109.11 2 files: lacked evidence of regular and systematic monitoring of IEP goals.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10) 2 files: lacked evidence of record of disclosure in the files.

Ed. 1123.05 2 files: lacked evidence that parents were given their annual notice of rights.

Ed. 1125.04 2 files: lacked evidence of written consent to evaluate.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The current preschool program should consider how it will provide services to a child with multiple disabilities, should such a student enroll in the program in the future. (example: nursing services and support for children with feeding issues).
- A transition process (policies and procedures) from early intervention services to preschool should be established.
- The preschool IEP form should have addendum attached when changes are made to the IEP.

Alton Central School (Elementary School)

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 2 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- The elementary school guidance counselor provides weekly lessons in every classroom on issues ranging from cooperation to peer pressure.
- There is currently a gifted and talented program providing a variety of services (pullout, whole group and individual).
- A philosophy of inclusion is followed in all classrooms and extracurricular activities.
- There is a strong parent-teacher-student association that is very involved in the school.
- The elementary school has a pleasant and warm atmosphere.
- The staff are caring and child-centered.
- The new Special Education Director is providing support and direction for teachers.
- Students seem engaged in classroom activities, which involve both direct and indirect teaching.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

- Ed. 1107.02(b) 1 file: lacked evidence of written prior notice evident for an evaluation meeting.
- Ed. 1107.05(k) 1 file: an evaluation was not completed within 45 days of parent permission.
- Ed. 1109.01(c) 1 file: IEP did not specify extent to which the student would participate in the regular classroom.
- Ed. 1109.01(g) 1 file: IEP did not contain location of services.
- Ed. 1109.03 1 file: lacked evidence of a speech-language pathologist (child's only code is speech-language disability) being present at the IEP/placement meeting.
- Ed. 1109.04(a) 1 file: lacked evidence that a 10-day notice of the IEP meeting was sent to parents.
- Ed. 1109.11 1 file: lacked evidence of regular and systematic monitoring of progress of IEP goals.
- Ed. 1123.04(a)(7) There was no record of access located near the files.
- Ed. 1123.04(a)(10) 1 file: Lacked evidence of record of disclosure in the file.
- Ed. 1123.14 1 file: lacked evidence that parents had been given their annual notice of rights.
- CFR 300.347(a)(4) 1 file: IEP lacked explanation of the extent to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in regular classes.
- CFR 300.347(a)(7)(I) 1 file: lacked evidence of explanation of how IEP goal progress would be measured.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Provide the elementary school guidance counselor with the equipment and space to develop an adventure-based counseling program.
- The gifted and talented program would benefit from developing written gifted and talented plans, signed by parents, which state the specific area(s) of the child's giftedness and a plan of action.
- The regular classroom teachers would benefit from staff development to help them work with special education students in their classrooms.
- The elementary school would benefit from more computers in the classrooms.
- Consider developing an after school program to provide extra help and support to students.

- The regular education teachers should be encouraged to become more involved in the writing of IEP goals and objectives.

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 2 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- The staff has found creative ways to use the limited space in the school and have maintained a positive spirit despite the lack of space.
- The teacher working with EH students in the upper elementary and middle grades is respected by staff and students, is viewed as caring and compassionate, and maintains strong communication with parents.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

- Ed. 1107.05(k) 1 file: evaluation was not administered within 45 days of parent permission and no extension was signed.
- Ed. 1109.01(a) 1 file: there is no description how the disability affects involvement and progress in the regular curriculum.
- Ed. 1109.01(b) 1 file: there are no measurable annual goals on the IEP.
- Ed. 1109.01(d) 1 file: the expectation of regular class participation is not specified on the IEP.
- Ed. 1109.01(g) 1 file: the frequency and location of services is not specified on the IEP.
- Ed. 1109.01(j) 1 file: the individuals responsible for implementing the IEP goals are not listed in the IEP.
- Ed. 1109.01(n) 1 file: there is no parent signature on the IEP.
- Ed. 1109.04(a) 1 file: lacked evidence that parents were given procedural safeguards at each notice of the IEP meeting.
- Ed. 1109.11 1 file: lacked evidence of regular and systematic monitoring of IEP goals.
- Ed. 1111.01 1 file: lacked evidence that extended school year programming was discussed or considered.
- Ed. 1115.06 1 file: lacked evidence that least restrictive environment was considered annually.
- Ed. 1123.04(a)(7) Record of access was not posted near the files.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Team members should specify their role and certification on the signature page of team meetings.
- Be sure to fill out a written prior notice for all meetings.
- Provide for a full-time middle school counselor position. The current counselor is part-time and is unable to appropriately support students or be involved in the classrooms.
- Update special education forms to meet the new federal regulations.

- There is a need for more updated computers in the middle school.

Alton Central School (High School)

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 2 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- The small size of the school ensures that students don't "fall through the cracks" and that teachers really get to know the students.
- All teachers are willing to modify class work for students and are concerned with helping students succeed.
- There is a strong peer tutoring program, where older students work with younger students.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

- Ed. 1107.02(d) 1 file: lacked evidence that parents were given procedural safeguards.
- Ed. 1107.03(b) 1 file: lacked evidence of a letter from the physician to indicate an Other Health Impaired disability.
- Ed. 1107.07(c) 1 file: lacked evidence that parent was involved in the determination of disability meeting.
1 file: lacked evidence that the parent received a copy of the evaluation report.
- Ed. 1109.01(a) 1 file: the IEP did not contain a complete present level of performance.
- Ed. 1109.01(b) 1 file: the IEP did not contain measurable annual goals or objectives.
1 file: the IEP did not contain any annual goals or objectives.
- Ed. 1109.01(c) 2 files: the IEP lacked explanation of the extent of regular class participation.
- Ed. 1109.01(d) 2 files: the IEP lacked specified expectation of regular class participation.
- Ed. 1109.01(e) 1 file: the IEP lacked evidence of a vocational component.
- Ed. 1109.01(g) 2 files: the IEP lacked frequency or location of services.
- Ed. 1109.01(i) 2 files: the IEP lacked objective criteria and evaluation schedules.
- Ed. 1109.01(j) 1 file: individuals responsible for providing services were not listed on the IEP.
- Ed. 1109.01(l) 2 files: the IEP did not contain a transition statement.
- Ed. 1109.01(m) 2 files: the IEP did not contain statement that transition services were not needed.
- Ed. 1109.01(n) 1 file: the IEP was not signed by the parent.
- Ed. 1109.03 2 files: lacked evidence that either the parent or student attended the IEP/placement meeting.
- Ed. 1109.04(a) 1 file: lacked evidence that parents were given a 10-day notice of the IEP meeting.
- Ed. 1109.04(d) 1 file: 10-day notice of IEP meeting did not indicate consideration of transition services.
- Ed. 1109.11 2 files: lacked evidence of regular and systematic monitoring of IEP goals.
- Ed. 1115.06 1 file: lacked evidence that least restrictive environment was addressed.
- Ed. 1123.04(a) Record of access was not posted near the special education files.
- Ed. 1125.03 1 file: lacked evidence of written prior notice.
- Ed. 1125.04(3-4) 1 file: lacked evidence of written consent for evaluation.

CFR 300.346(a)(i)(iii) 2 files: the IEP lacked evidence that state testing was considered.

Alton Central School (High School), Continued
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CITATIONS: Continued

CFR 300.347(a)(4) 2 files: the IEP lacked evidence of extent of regular class participation.

CFR 300.347(a)(7)(i)(ii) 2 files: lacked evidence of statement of how IEP progress would be measured or how parents would be informed of this progress.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Review the current format being used to organize student records to ensure that essential information is organized and easily retrieved.
- The resource room would benefit from updated computers and technology.
- Consider additional paraprofessionals to assist in the facilitation of inclusion.
- Increased staff development for all staff on inclusion and classroom modifications would be beneficial.
- A full-time coordinator for the growing work-study program is needed.
- Staff would benefit from more frequent special education staff meetings to share and improve their knowledge of the special education process.
- Regular and special education staff need more time to meet together to discuss students' needs.
- The "30 minute solution" team needs to be modified to include more teachers who have knowledge of the students being discussed for potential intervention.
- Increase the availability of psychological/counseling services for high school students.
- Provide more supplemental reading materials for special education students.

Out-of-District Files

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Out-of-District Files

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 1 File

COMMENDATIONS:

- The home based-school program with consultation from the May Institute, and the transition program back into Grade 1 is creative and positive.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

- Ed. 1107.02(b) 1 file: lacked evidence of written notice of referral.
- Ed. 1107.02(d) 1 file: lacked evidence that parents were given a copy of procedural safeguards during the referral process.
- Ed. 1107.03(a) 1 file: lacked evidence that the evaluation team met the multidisciplinary criteria.
- Ed. 1107.06 1 file: lacked evidence of a current evaluation summary report.
- Ed. 1109.03 1 file: lacked evidence that the team included a parent, regular education teacher, special education teacher, LEA representative, or a person who can interpret evaluation results at the evaluation and determination meetings.
- Ed. 1109.04(a) 1 file: lacked evidence that 10-day notice of IEP meeting was given to parents.
- Ed. 1123.04 Record of access is not posted near the special education files.
- Ed. 1123.05 1 file: lacked evidence that parents were given their annual notice of rights.
- Ed. 1123.14 1 file: lacked evidence of record of disclosure in the file.
- Ed. 1125.03 1 file: lacked evidence of recent written prior notice.
- Ed. 1125.04 1 file: lacked evidence of a signed written consent to evaluate.
- CFR#300.347(a)(5) 1 file: lacked evidence of statement that the student would or wouldn't participate in state or district-wide assessments.

SUGGESTIONS:

- A more consistent process for evaluations should be developed and followed.
- Update special education forms to address the current state and federal requirements.

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU #72

Student File Review

Case Study Document

Reimbursement Claim Form

Case Study Addendum Form

<p style="text-align: center;">ADDENDUM JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</p>

SAU # 72

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 1 File

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <u>Ed. 1107.02(d)</u> | 1 file: lacked evidence of signed written permission to evaluate. |
| <u>Ed. 1107.03(a)</u> | 1 file: lacked evidence that a multidisciplinary team for evaluations convened. |
| <u>Ed. 1107.07(c)</u> | 1 file: lacked evidence that the team determining the disabilities included all the required members. |
| <u>Ed. 1109.01</u> | 1 file: lacked evidence of current IEP or an extension of the previous IEP. |
| <u>Ed. 1115.06</u> | 1 file: lacked evidence that the educational placement is determined annually. |
| <u>Ed. 1123.03(1)</u> | 1 file: lacked evidence of any written prior notices. |
| <u>Ed. 1129.05(a)(8)</u> | 1 file: lacked evidence of statement of placement signed by the parent and the LEA representative. |
| <u>34 CFR300.307</u> | 1 file: lacked evidence of record of whether or not the student participates in a regular or specially designed physical education program. |